

FINDINGS: Systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations of freedom of religion or belief continue to occur in Sudan. Violations include: the efforts by the Arab Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum to impose sharia on Muslims and non-Muslims alike; governmental promotion of Sudan's identity as being Arab and Muslim, thus effectively relegating non-Arabs and non-Muslims to a secondary status in the society; the criminalization of conversion from Islam, a crime punishable by death, and the intense scrutiny, intimidation, and even torture of suspected converts by government security personnel; the denial of the rights of non-Muslims to public religious expression and persuasion, while allowing Muslims to proselytize; and the difficulty in obtaining permission to build churches, as compared to government funding of mosque construction.

Based on these concerns, USCIRF again recommends in 2010 that Sudan be named a "country of particular concern," or CPC. The State Department designated Sudan as a CPC annually since 1999.

USCIRF identified Sudan as the world's most violent abuser of the right to freedom of religion or belief for acts that took place during the North-South civil war (1983-2005). However, since the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) ended the North-South civil war in January 2005, conditions for religious freedom have improved in Southern Sudan and in contested areas in central Sudan. The Government of National Unity (GNU) instituted by the CPA has officially operated under an Interim National Constitution with provisions guaranteeing universal human rights, including freedom of religion or belief. Despite these provisions, severe human rights violations continue against both non-Muslims and Muslims in government-controlled areas, as well as in Darfur, where the State Department has determined that acts of genocide have taken place and may still be ongoing. The greatest danger to religious freedom and other human rights in Sudan is the collapse of the fragile peace brought about by the CPA.

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS: U.S. involvement was instrumental in ending the North-South civil war, during which civilian victims overwhelmingly were Southern Christians and followers of traditional African religions. As a guarantor of the CPA, the U.S. government

has an obligation to work to ensure its robust implementation. In addition to recommending that Sudan continue to be designated a CPC, USCIRF urges the U.S. government to remain engaged at the highest levels to bring about a just and lasting peace for all of Sudan. The U.S. government should insist on full CPA implementation; assist the parties in preparing for a successful 2011 referendum on the South's political future; work with parties to advance discussions on post-2011 issues; insist on strengthened human rights protections in both North and South Sudan; work to prevent violence against civilians and hold perpetrators responsible; and help Southern Sudan build its governing structure and indigenous economy in anticipation of the 2011 referendum. Additional recommendations for U.S. policy towards Sudan can be found in the 2010 Annual Report chapter on Sudan and by following this link:

<http://www.uscifr.gov/images/ar2010/sudan2010.pdf>